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and their original freshness will reward your research with a higher and purer satisfaction, than appertains to the display of the most brilliant exotic. The "lone and tranquil" lakes embosomed in ancient forests, that abound in our wild districts, the unshorn mountains surrounding them with their richly-textured covering, the ocean prairies of the West, and many other forms of Nature yet spared from the pollutions of civilization, afford a guarantee for a reputation of originality that you may elsewhere long seek and find not.

I desire not to limit the universality of the Art, or require that the artist shall sacrifice aught to patriotism; but, untrammelled as he is, and free from academic or other restraints by virtue of his position, why should not the American landscape painter, in accordance with the principle of self-government, boldly originate a high and independent style, based on his native resources? ever cherishing an abiding faith that the time is not far remote when his beloved Art will stand out amid the scenery of his "own green forest land," wearing as fair a coronal as ever graced a brow "in that Old World beyond the deep."

Truly yours,

A. B. DURAND.

LETTERS FROM A LIGHT-HOUSE.

BY A LANDSCAPE PAINTER.

W. LIGHT, December 15.

DEAR S.,—I have at last contrived to add a few weeks more to the sketching season. When all that makes the country most fair is faded and dead, the sea and its rock barriers are still as wild and stern as ever. I am domiciled in W. Light-house, on a long point of land that thrusts itself out into the sea, and from which we have a clear horizon for more than half the points of the compass. A sunrise and a sunset at sea every day!—think of it, city dreamers! Here from morn till night "still shouts the inspiring sea," until one is almost maddened by its eloquence. In these still days the hushed murmur of the surf, beating on the rocks that make barrier to the point, or falling measuredly on the beach, is a sound to me very pleasant; for, apart from the solemn majesty of its monody, and the seriousness of thought it calls to, as a church-bell to worship, it is a part of some of the pleasantest dreams of my childhood.

It seems to me that all of the sea that is grandest is found at its shore. The open ocean never impresses me very powerfully, and there seems more of the spirit of infinity and sublimity in the walk of old Homer's hero "along the sands of the loud-sounding sea," than in all the poetry of the "sea tosh" verse of modern time. The regular beat of the surf gives an impression of infinity, and of a mighty element at work which is wanting in the

"Melancholy wash of endless waves."

I was never lost at sea, even at night. I never felt the immense space around me but once, and then only for an instant. It was while returning from Europe by steamer. I was standing at the bow, looking forward into the gathering twilight mist, which mingled sky and sea together, so that it was impossible to discover the horizon. Above, it was clear and starry, and beneath smooth—there was no swell even. The

ship was running 14 knots an hour, and the water parted in wreaths of light beneath me, while the rapid beat of the ponderous wheels filling my ears, seemed in the silence, otherwise unbroken, some strange and mighty sea-sound. I peered long into the veil beyond, and, as I thought of the days that we had uninterruptedly pursued our way, and those which must yet pass before we reach our port, a realization of oceanic space burst upon me like a flash of light. It was overpowering, but passed as quickly as it came, and the sea was itself again.

I sometimes stroll at nightfall along the fine beach that runs back from the point, and watch the darkness gather over the water, and as the horizon begins to grow indistinct, and flicker before the intense gaze, one becomes conscious of a weird presence giving a strange animation to the breakers that come rolling from the seaward with devouring intent, each moment increasing in size, and yawning with wilder eagerness, until, checked by the limit at which the "proud waves are stayed," with a roar and white gnashing of teeth they break and dissolve into thin foam, retreating with a harsh murmur, and gather anew to the vain endeavor. I have watched them sometimes until an unconquerable frenzy of dread has come over me, and I have rushed far up the beach for security.

It is grand to see from such a place as this, the day-tide run through its flood and ebb; the sky grow golden with the approaching sun-rise, and the little clouds along the horizon change from their dull grey, to the warmth and life of sunlight, till the sun bursts "sudden-slow" on the sight, and the little waves come dancing in with each its line of gold or crimson mingling them with the white foam on the sand. Then the sun mounts upward through all the changes of the cloud-filled sky, to the high flood of noon with its white heat, its calm and repose. The "Modern Painters" says, I think, that there is no sentiment in noon-day, but to me there is one higher, purer, than in any other time of day. There is a grandeur, a serenity, and breadth we find at no other hour—a sentiment of repose, as of some mighty element, impassive and unchangeable in its white-hot misty skies. Now, even, as I lie on the turf at the sunny side of the light-house, the sun at noon warms me into apathy and dreaminess, and I hardly know that it is not summer.

Then, as the sun sinks, the scud-clouds drift over it, each choosing from its light such garment of color as best suits itself—gold, and crimson, and purple, and some are content with a quieter grey—and when the day is done, and the sky is golden again with twilight, their masses float over it in cold dead blue, so ghost-like that one shrinks from the ungenial hue. Then the waves come dancing in again, in lines of that blue, woven in with the gold of the sky and the sea green, and lapping against some stranded fragments of timber, remnants perhaps of some mighty ship. How exquisite an illustration the whole seems of Longfellow's lines—

"Clouds in the evening sky more darkly gather
And shattered wrecks lie thicker on the strand."

Far off, resting on the still glowing horizon, rise little pinnacles of cloud, glimmer-

ings of hope and life, while the solitary island seen to the seaward, is severed by the mirage, and floats in the air like the mockery of some fairy illusion, some air-built land, after which you might sail for ever.

You will ask me what I do here. I sketch almost every day. Sheltered by some bluff bank from the wind, and with two overcoats on, I work in mittens sometimes, and sometimes it is so quiet and sunny, that I can work as well as in October. For more than a week we have had most glorious weather—quiet!—oh, how quiet! The vessels pass lazily by, with every foot of canvas spread to catch all that may be of the chance breathings of the wind—the sea-birds sail leisurely around the point, turning side-wise to look what sort of creature I am, basking in the sunlight with an overcoat on, and the surf rolls in with a hushed sound, like distant thunder, or swelling sluggishly over the rocks, meets in gurgling, yeasty eddies on the other side. And so the day passes, in tranquillity and lazy labor.

Yours truly,
W.

December 25th.

DEAR S.,—Our glorious weather of my last date ended in a southeaster. The surf began to roll in grandly, and taking my painting materials, I went out on the beach. Leaden grey clouds unbroken covered the sky, and the black, abysmal water was streaked with long lines of driven foam; the breakers, no longer coming up to the beach with staid and measured motion, hurried in beaten down by the wind, surf after surf in quick succession, making a broad band of froth, whitening along the beach for miles, and lessening into a thread in the distance; and the creamy foam ridged up along the water line was flirited by the wind in clots and fragments high up the beach. The few vessels that passed hurried along, under close reefed sails, looking uncomfortable and frightened. I cowered in the rifts in the sand bank that bounds the beach, till the rain began to come in drops not few and far aslant, when I gathered myself up and started for the light.

Bound in doors for a time, I amused myself listening to the yarns of the light-keeper, and chatting with the girls, when they had recovered from their diffidence sufficiently to converse freely. The light-keeper is a sturdy, weather-beaten old seaman, sincere, and simple-hearted as a child. He lives in this little world of his, contented, with his family, his religion, and his light. (I name them in the order of importance they assume in his speaking of them.) Of the efficacy and importance of the latter he is very proud. He says, that "on a right dark night you can see to read all round the light-house." "Happy, thrice happy he," ignorant of the perplexities of philosophy, and the pains of money-making. The eldest daughter, Lydia, a tall, graceful girl, with fine though irregular features, exquisitely chiselled mouth and chin, and heavy-lidded Madonna eyes filled almost to overflowing with the dormant feeling of deep-souled, earnest woman, moves about the house quiet, and as though her future life with all its weight and sadness shone around her. The next, Anna, is fuller in

form, with a head moulded on the perfect Minerva type, large, full, blue eyes, and, as her face indicates, has more energy and vivacity, and less of the seriousness of her elder sister. I do not think I ever saw a face more beautiful in the lines of the mouth and nostril. I have watched their play as she sat thoughtfully sewing in the evening, and grew almost enraptured at their exceeding beauty. Were I a portrait painter, I should most certainly make a study of her head. There are in all ten children, none of whom, except the eldest son, have ever been ten miles from the light-house.

After a storm comes a calm; the excited element sinks to rest again, and that rest, how glorious amid the traces of the conflict! This poor, futile element has gained nothing on the bounds that checked it. It has only piled higher its sand barrier. After a two days' gale, the wind shifted in the night, and the next day it cleared off, and the broken masses of cloud drifted seaward all day long, and sunlight and shadow played over the huge sand banks, and raced over the beach, and then fearlessly out on the sea, still heaving and tossing, but blue and foamless now. Along the beach were strewn piles of seaweed, shells, star-fish, &c., and occasionally the body of some more rarely seen child of the deep, with fragments of wood, worm-eaten, and, perhaps, tossed for years hither and thither on the unstable element. I picked up a few bits, new and rare to me, among them a bunch of dead man's fingers—don't start! it is only a kind of sponge, so called from its form, and perfectly innocent of humanity, until I took it up.

I took my usual walk along the beach in the evening. The surf once more rolling in, in its wonted dignity, was lit up with a phosphorescent gleaming. It was magnificent to see through the obscurity of night that long black wall raising up from the sea, and reaching its full height first, like distant thunder-clouds in a lightning flash, which run along the 'comber,' as it broke along the beach; and as it drew off, the foam sparkled and twinkled with the living lights scattered there. I picked up a few by taking up a portion of the sand, and found only a point of blue light—the animal was not to be discerned from the sand, even by the candle light.

Since the storm, the weather has been colder and clearer. It is almost too cold to paint out of doors, except a little while at noon, when I sit in the shelter of the light or some of the bluff sand banks. I ought to go back to the city, but the place has a strange fascination for me. I take long walks on the beach, and one day, determined to reach a picturesque-looking cliff, which certainly did not seem more than two or three miles away, I walked until nearly nightfall, and then, not having reached it, turned back as the sun was setting. Darkness found me still on my way, with the light beaming out in the distance with wonderful intensity, for the clouds had shut out all the stars. The beach forms a deep bay, and the light fell across the water, first white and then red, as the lantern revolved, and the lines of light played along the waves that rolled in, and glistened on the wet sand as they drew back. The sound of the surf was an incessant low murmur, and the effect of it on

the mind was wonderful. It carried me back to the pine groves where I played in boyhood; and fancy, excited by the solitude, changed the light into an eye, watching my steps as it had my past life. I became excited, and hurried, stumbling along, to get home—to get away from being alone. The silence, which I felt in spite of the incessant sea-song, which, indeed, added to the excitement, and the slow, winking, glaring light, altogether made me almost wild and weary; and sore-footed, I reached the light-house. I have not since gone on any such chase after the cliffs of the mirage.

Yours truly,
W.

It is vain to suppose that our enthusiasm for music can prevail, that our tribute to its altars should become an unremitting duty, unless it can be made to constitute a part of general education and be incorporated in the plan of all elementary schools. By this course, the harmony of tone, as a science, will find its earliest birth, and being thus awakened in youth and fostered into being through all subsequent manhood, its attachments and associations will add largely to the poetry of American life.

Inculcated, as it now is, under a superficial system, as one of the external graces of life, with no view whatever to the true development of the moral sense, it has no visible influence on the national taste. Much of this is owing, unfortunately, to the class of composition instilled into the pupil and the early deterioration of taste. In this we are happy in saying there is a constant amelioration taking place, although wide scope is left for reform. Judging from the large business and immense sales of musical instruments in the United States, we must become satisfied that devotion to musical study is rapidly spreading, and that its cultivation is becoming almost universal; yet it is not so much the amount of means or extent of the pursuit in which we are lacking, as the quality of composition and mode of instillation.

Were musical science actually cultivated in proportion to the number of instruments sold, and were this cultivation rendered productive, so as to carry out all the intents and all the influences of the Euterpean Art, exercising not merely the purposes of artificial grace, but leading to the higher end of a true moral refinement and feeling, we should undoubtedly have more visible fruits. When its study shall assume this attitude, or when it shall be placed in apposition to the study of general literature, in which every one who reads to some extent can write, it must become prolific in its rare emanations of original thought and emotion. In the attribute of feeling, which is its peculiar sphere, we are sometimes charged, particularly by the Germans, with being deficient.

But we have shown the physiological law that guides this quality, and we know, from all the well-acknowledged traits of American enthusiasm, that emotion burns within us. It is simply the defect of primary instruction and its not being interwoven in the texture of elementary education, that restrains our advancement, and renders our soil, as yet, unfertile in its musical conception. This alone can promote a literature, consecrated to the glory and beauty of Lyric Art, and it is the first step towards the formation of a national school. All the intellectual qualities which bear upon our nationality must start from the bud of an early training, and to render this effectual and operative we must not trust to all the suggestions of a progressive and railroad age, but go back to Grecian models.

The Grecian forms have, to some extent, been introduced among us by the foreign Germans, assembling in festive multitudes and setting up

their shrine to the Muses. Whether the grossness of life pervades these festivities in a greater degree than it did among the ancient Greeks, we are left without data to determine, as the gloss of age and the poetry that lend its enchantment to such long chronicled scenes, conceal all minor defects of the picture. We are confident, however, that national Euterpean festivals would conduce, more than any other species of anniversary celebration, to the refinement of the American people. It is a trait of vanity becoming too general, to imagine that a progressive spirit should reach every department of improvement. The genius of American society with all its compound elements, is not adverse to the introduction of the old Grecian forms in their modified and modern application. The same Olympian feeling yet animates the living race of man, and the same desires and ambition in the concurrence of talent are active under other manifestations. The festive predisposition shows itself in every phase of society, and among our countrymen this might be turned to account, by the institution of established Euterpean solemnities, united with the cultivation of Eloquence and Poetry, and the exhibition of the performances of genius in the department of the Fine Arts. That this is not an idle suggestion, but really feasible, we must refer to what we really do exhibit in the arts, and the efforts we have but recently made in ponderous musical attempts. Further, to effect these great æsthetic purposes, we should cease borrowing old usages and conventionalism from a kindred Anglo-Saxon race, but set up our own nationality upon the basis of cosmopolitanism. We feel very sanguine that the national musical festival already begun might be extended, so as to become a distinguishing relaxation of our people, and minister to our pure pleasures, and that by a union with the sister arts, a symmetrical whole would be imparted to the institution, so as to become truly Grecian in its main features.

Perhaps one of the greatest obstacles to the formation of a national poesy, either in its written or lyric form, is that remarkable historic event which sets us down as a complete and fully developed nation, endowed with the accessories of wealth, and the corrupting influences of luxury. A truly national poesy is built upon the material furnished by the pastoral and unsophisticated portion of the nation, and an artificial state of society seems fatal to the genuine poetry of life, and all that constitutes a naive prose fiction.

All modern fiction, essentially national, will, we think, be found to flow from this fountain; for here the emotions are unchecked, and the heart is unveiled. To this cause we must, in a great measure, trace the growing nationality of Negro Minstrelsy and Negro literature, they being the only portion of our people, among whom, united to a certain species of borrowed intelligence, we find the only characteristic and well defined *naïveté* of a marked population.

The musical festivals would, we think, counteract the deadening influence of luxurious habits upon the idyllic tendency of American literature and song. We have all the means required for such performances, both as regards lyrical talent and congenial localities; and these should be selected not amid the din of cities, where an American rowdiness would be certain to desecrate the cause of Art, and disturb the solemnity of the occasion; but in the bosom of nature, where the birds might be heard in responsive echoes to the harmonies of tone.—*Dwight's Journal of Music.*

THE painter who is content with the praise of the world in respect to that which does not satisfy himself is not an artisan; for though his reward be only praise, his pay is that of a mechanic—for his time and not for his art.—*W. Allston.*